

Only a few Liberty nickels mean big money

By Roger Boye

Here are answers to more coin questions from Chicago Tribune readers.

Q—I've read that a 1913 Liberty nickel sells for \$50,000. We've got three such Liberty coins dated 1910 and one 1911. Are they also worth big money?

F. R., Lansing

A—No. Each item you describe retails today for about 60 cents if in "good condition." Both dates are common among collectors because each was made in huge quantities.

The government halted production of Liberty nickels in December 1912 and introduced the Indian-head nickel in early 1913. But one or more workers secretly produced at least five 1913 Liberty nickels at the Philadelphia Mint and smuggled them out of the building, possibly in late 1912. One of the five known coins sold for \$385,000 in 1985.

Q—We returned from a vacation abroad with dozens of foreign coins, most from France and Germany. Where can we get U. S. money for them? Our bank won't make a trade.

E. P., Orland Park

A—Most commercial banks no longer exchange foreign coins for "greenbacks" because it often costs more to process and ship the coins than they are worth. You might be able to sell them to someone heading for Europe, or you could give the coins to a youngster and perhaps spark an interest in coin collecting.

Q—Are \$1 bills bearing a picture of President Reagan considered rare? We bought three of them at a gift store.

J. K., Chicago Heights

A—Many people attach photographs of famous persons to U. S. paper money, often as a sales gimmick. The bills still are "legal tender," but they have no special value as collectibles.

Q—What does "e pluribus unum" mean on our money?

N. M., Chicago

A—"One out of many," a

motto that appears on all U. S. coins currently in circulation. Taken from a Latin poem attributed to Virgil, it refers to the formation of "one" nation, the United States of America, out of "many," the 13 original states.

Q—Are Eisenhower silver dollars from 1971, 1972 and 1974 worth much? We got them from our bank years ago.

P. E., Chicago

A—Ike dollars placed into circulation between 1971 and 1978 were made of copper and nickel—not silver—and have little to no special value as collectibles. Look at the edges of your coins to see the red copper core. Silver Ikes—which contain .32 of an ounce of precious metal each—went into hard-plastic holders for sale to collectors. They command modest premiums on

the hobby market.

Q—Over the years we've saved out of pocket change 750 Jefferson nickels made between 1938 and 1958 and now would like to sell them to a dealer. How much should we expect to get?

V. B., Elmwood Park

A—Dealers will pay from 15 to 20 cents each for many Jeffersons dated 1942 and all made between 1943 and 1945, because the coins each contain .056 of an ounce of silver. The metal nickel was eliminated from five-cent pieces starting mid 1942 so that it could be used to make weapons for World War II.

Most of the other dates wholesale for no more than seven cents each in "fine condition," with two major exceptions the 1939-D (wholesale value \$2 in "fine") and 1950-D (\$4)].